



FROM STORIES TO ACTIONS



**A RURAL LATINO
VISION
TO STRENGTHEN
COMMUNITIES
FOR A THRIVING
MINNESOTA**

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the participation of community members in MCLA's listening sessions and community leaders interviewed by MCLA. These individuals sacrificed time that could have been spent elsewhere to tell the Council about their daily realities and their hopes for the future.

The Council is deeply grateful to the Community Ambassadors who connected MCLA to local community members and helped arrange the logistics of MCLA's visit to these cities.

MCLA would also like to thank the elected officials who came to the community listening sessions to speak with their Latino constituents. Their presence was appreciated, and MCLA welcomes any opportunity to connect members of the Latino communities with their State Representatives and Senators.

Authors

Henry Jiménez

Executive Director
Immigration

Caitlin Zanon

Author and Editor

Eric Armacanqui

Economic Development

Violeta Hernández Espinosa

Education

Rosa Tock

Health

Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs | 658 Cedar St. Ste. G-56 | St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 757-1760 | <https://mn.gov/mcla/>
Facebook: MinnCLA | Twitter: @MinnCLA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	7
Overview on Locations Visited by Policy Area.....	9
Findings and Recommendations	
Health.....	14
Economic Development.....	18
Education.....	21
Immigration.....	25
Community Profiles	
Willmar.....	28
Worthington.....	29
Marshall.....	30
Long Prairie.....	31
Northfield.....	32
Mankato.....	33
St. James.....	34
Conclusion.....	35
Appendix A: Listening Session Questions.....	36
Appendix B: Demographic Information Survey.....	37
Appendix C: References.....	38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs is a state agency charged with advising and informing the governor's office and the state legislature on matters that are important to Latino communities throughout Minnesota, serving as a bridge between Minnesotan Latinos and the state government. In June 2017, the Council embarked on a community engagement tour in rural Minnesota, visiting seven cities where a high percentage of the population is Latino or Hispanic: Willmar, Worthington, Marshall, Long Prairie, Northfield, Mankato, and St. James. The Council hosted community listening sessions to hear directly from an estimated 170 members of the community and also held 48 interviews with community leaders in health, education, economic development, and elected officials to hear about the successes and challenges of the local Latino communities. MCLA returned to the cities in October and November 2017 to share findings and receive feedback from community members. Community members fully validated the findings and recommendations of this report and also provided additions that are reflected in the current version of this report.

The views expressed by community members and leaders in rural Minnesota underlined some of the pressing issues Latinos throughout the state face, but which may be more pronounced for constituents living far from support services and established social networks.

- About 1 in 4 Latinos in Minnesota lack health insurance, increasing out-of-pocket costs for these individuals and decreasing their likelihood of seeking preventive care.
- Latino students are 8.8% of the Minnesota student population, but Latino teachers make up just 1% of the state's teacher workforce.
- Minnesotan Latinos have the highest labor force participation rate in the state at 75%, but Latino households have far lower annual household incomes than the Minnesota median household income.
- Over 70% of Latinos in Minnesota are U.S. citizens, but some of the barriers associated with being undocumented affect Latino U.S. citizens and undocumented Latino Minnesotans alike.

Findings from MCLA's community engagement will inform the Council's future legislative and policy agenda. Although some concerns expressed were unique to one city, themes were often repeated from one location to the next. The following summary contains the major findings from the rural community engagement tour in MCLA's four legislative focus areas (Health, Economic Development, Education, and Immigration), along with the Council's recommendations for the state legislature and governor's office. The report also contains a community profile of each city to highlight key concerns that may be better addressed locally, in addition to the major findings discussed earlier in the report.

Health

Health Insurance and Health Care Costs: Latino communities in rural Minnesota have difficulty accessing health care due to health insurance barriers and unaffordable health care costs, in addition to difficulties navigating complicated health care systems. These challenges may be greater for undocumented immigrants.

Recommendations:

- 1) Support local initiatives aimed at allowing more individuals to opt for health insurance regardless of immigration status.
- 2) Continue advocating for the Affordable Care Act and reforms that will not dismantle recent progress.
- 3) Support MNSure and culturally relevant MNSure Navigators to help individuals and family members access health insurance.

Language Barriers and Interpreters: Language barriers are prominent for Latino community members whether they speak Spanish or another language. It is critical that community members have access to quality interpreters who understand both medical terminology and the nuances of speakers' first language.

Recommendations:

- 1) Continue advocating for bill HF2030/SF1708 "Spoken language health care interpreters registry" that will replace the current interpreters' roster.

Sense of Belonging: A sense of belonging is an important determinant of health and one that is often lacking for Latino community members as they encounter structural and overt racism. The communities visited often lack support networks and infrastructure to welcome newly arriving immigrants.

Recommendations:

- 1) Support community health clinics and multicultural centers with state grants.
- 2) Support Equity Policies and/or Health in All Policies.
- 3) Support structures that allow Latino representation on the City Council and other public boards that can function as a liaison between Latinos and government.

Economic Development

Entrepreneurial Assistance: Despite an eagerness to own their own businesses, many Latinos in Minnesota struggle with starting a business. They may also face barriers in accessing bank loans that will help them in this process.

Recommendations:

- 1) Recommend that more funding be allocated for the Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED) Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program.
- 2) Encourage policy changes to state grants that disadvantage new or small nonprofits.

Affordable Housing: Housing is a major challenge for Latinos in rural Minnesota due to an overall housing shortage in the state and a particular lack of affordable housing. The situation is worsened for those who do not have a social security number, who may also face poor housing conditions due to predatory landlords that take advantage of their undocumented immigration status.

Recommendations:

- 1) Support a bonding bill that has significant allocations to housing development.
- 2) Advocate measures that increase Latino homeownership.

Social Security Number Limitations: Lack of a social security number affects undocumented Latino immigrants by limiting them to low-paying work that provides no opportunity for upward mobility. These jobs often have long hours and difficult conditions which limit workers from accessing other resources.

Recommendations:

- 1) Advocate for innovative policy changes to allow for the use of an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) in lieu of a Social Security Number.
- 2) Support legislation to strengthen policies to prevent Wage Theft.

Education

Student Support by Educators: There is a shortage of Latino, bilingual, or cross-culturally competent educators in Minnesota schools, which affects Latino students as they do not have teachers with whom they can communicate or who can serve as role models or advocate for their interests. Although Latino and bilingual teachers are lacking, some schools in the communities visited have cultural or family liaisons that support students holistically as they progress through their education.

Recommendations:

- 1) Continue advocating for measures to increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers.
- 2) Advocate for greater cross-cultural competence and trauma-informed practice in educators, staff, and administration.
- 3) Show support for cultural liaisons and community navigators.

Student Support by Parents: Parental involvement in Latino children's education may be limited for a variety of reasons. Many community members believe that language barriers are lessening as interpreters are more readily available; however, parents may still be hindered by lack of system understanding and the economic demands of providing for their families.

Recommendations:

- 1) Address language needs of the Latino community.
- 2) Expand multigenerational approaches.

Access to Higher Education and Opportunity Gap Barriers: Latino youths' transition to colleges and universities is particularly inhibited by lack of system knowledge and financial barriers, as well as other barriers to higher education completion. Funding for and limits on English Language Learner (ELL) programming, limitations to extracurricular opportunities, lack of transportation, and limited opportunities to enroll children in preschool programs were important topics to community members. These challenges may contribute to the opportunity gap between Latino students and the majority culture students, impacting them well into the future.

Recommendations:

- 1) Improve college access for Latino youth.
- 2) Advocate for more funding in ELL programs.
- 3) Maintain and increase public school funding and targeted funds.
- 4) Improve childcare and pre-kindergarten access.

Immigration

Political Representation: Latino residents are a growing demographic but often lack political representation in these rural communities. Especially in the context of anti-Latino discourse occurring at the national level, it is important that Latino community members see themselves represented in local leadership that will make their voices heard.

Recommendations:

- 1) Support the creation of a Governor's Commission on New Minnesotans.
- 2) Increase citizenship by supporting the Citizenship Opportunity Act. Citizenship would give new Minnesotans access to higher wage employment in addition to becoming eligible to vote.
- 3) Increase resources and accessibility to new Minnesotans.

Transportation: Transportation is a common barrier to Latino community members in these areas of Minnesota since public transit is limited, and Latinos who are undocumented immigrants are unable to attain a driver's license. Transportation barriers affect Latino community members' ability to arrive at their workplaces, schools, medical appointments, and more.

Recommendations:

- 1) Extend reliable public transportation routes to and from employment hubs, especially during shift changes at local manufacturing plants.
- 2) Increase public transportation services between municipalities.

Access to Driver's Licenses and Municipal Identification Cards: Community members are deeply affected by and concerned with the inability to access driver's licenses, and they and local authority figures alike agreed that supporting this issue is critical because it is also a public safety concern.

Recommendations:

- 1) Promote safe roads and highways by permitting access to driver's licenses to all who meet the requirements regardless of immigration status.
- 2) Introduction of Municipal Identification Cards that can prove identity and residence in the card-issuing municipality as a tool to encourage more inclusive participation.

INTRODUCTION

About MCLA

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs is a state government agency located in the executive branch. The role of the Council is to advise and inform the state legislature and governor's office on policy as it affects Latino constituents in Minnesota. MCLA focuses its work on the following four topics: Health, Economic Development, Education, and Immigration. MCLA fulfills its mission by advocating for legislation, conducting research and community outreach, collaborating with stakeholders, and acting as a bridge between Minnesotan Latino communities and the state government.



Role of Community Engagement

It is MCLA's responsibility to engage with community members to accurately and effectively lend their voice to the legislative and policy-making process. MCLA therefore relies on feedback from the community to shape a legislative agenda that is representative of the Latino people of this state. The Council views community engagement as a vital tool to better understand the varying needs of these Minnesotans. The estimated 270,000 Latinos in Minnesota come from diverse backgrounds;¹ a Latino community member working at a meat-processing plant in rural southern Minnesota will have a different set of concerns than a community member who owns a small grocery store in the Twin Cities metro area. However, MCLA exists to represent both of these individuals.

Rural Minnesota Community Tour

Approximately one-third of Minnesota's Latino population resides in rural Minnesota, particularly in the southern part of the state. MCLA has heard from many community members living in rural parts of the state that they feel isolated from the political process occurring at the capitol, and the Council recognizes the importance of highlighting their voices. The Council decided to embark on a rural Minnesota community engagement tour, visiting seven cities throughout June 2017. Cities were selected by choosing locations where a high percentage of the population was Latino or Hispanic.

Community Engagement Approach

MCLA engaged in three types of information collection through its rural Minnesota community engagement tour. These were 1) individual interviews with local community leaders and elected officials; 2) community listening sessions; and 3) demographic information surveys of listening session participants.

The Council conducted 48 interviews with community leaders from local government, law enforcement, school districts, healthcare providers, workforce centers, nonprofit organizations, and faith-based institutions in the seven cities visited. MCLA policy liaisons and executive director selected interviewees by mapping out important community stakeholders who directly affect or are affected by members of the Latino community in one of MCLA's four policy areas. Interviews were recorded through note-taking only, so a limitation of this information is that there are no audio recordings and therefore no transcriptions of interviews.

MCLA held a community listening session in each city. Community listening sessions were arranged by community ambassadors who are members of the local community identified by MCLA staff, board, or collaborating partners as local leaders capable of arranging event logistics and recruiting community members to attend. Community ambassadors were crucial to the success of MCLA's listening sessions as they could convey the nature of the listening sessions and their confidentiality so that participants would feel safe

sharing their personal opinions with MCLA. One limitation of the community ambassador approach was that ambassadors first recruited from their own networks, so at times the composition of the listening sessions may not reflect the underlying demographics of the community.

MCLA worked with Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research to create a facilitation guide for the community listening sessions (See *Appendix A: Listening Session Questions*). Community listening sessions were held primarily in Spanish, except on one occasion where all present were fluent English speakers. MCLA staff and interns took notes during the listening sessions, and the sessions were also recorded (audio only). The recordings were later transcribed into an English language transcription. Frequently, children were present at the listening sessions, and they were encouraged to participate. Identities of the listening session participants were not recorded, and all identifying information was kept confidential so that participants could engage in the conversation freely.

A final component of the community engagement tour was a demographic information survey (see *Appendix B: Demographic Information Survey*). The survey was developed to get a better understanding of the characteristics of individuals attending the community listening sessions. Survey questions were the same as or similar to U.S. Census questions regarding age, race, ethnicity, income, and education. Surveys were available in either Spanish or English. Participation in the survey was voluntary, so the number of participants in the survey was often not representative of total listening session attendance. Furthermore, the survey was completed at the end of a listening session; therefore, participants who needed to leave early were not able to participate in this component. A final limitation of the survey is that, per U.S. Census format, the optional responses for the “race” question (Caucasian, African American...) do not necessarily reflect how Latino or Hispanic persons identify themselves.

Listening Session Participant Demographic Overview

Age	Gender	Annual Household Income	English Fluency	U.S. or Foreign Born	Educational Attainment
Avg. Age: 37	Female: 70%	Less than \$25K: 22%	Fluent: 46%	Foreign Born: 68%	Grade School or Below: 54%
Age Range: 12-73	Male: 29%	Between \$25-\$50K: 39%	Partially Fluent: 21%	U.S. Born: 29%	High School: 24%
		More than \$50K: 10%	Difficulty with English: 28%	Lived in U.S. more than 10 years: 56%	College or Higher: 16%

Interpretation of Findings from Interviews and Listening Sessions

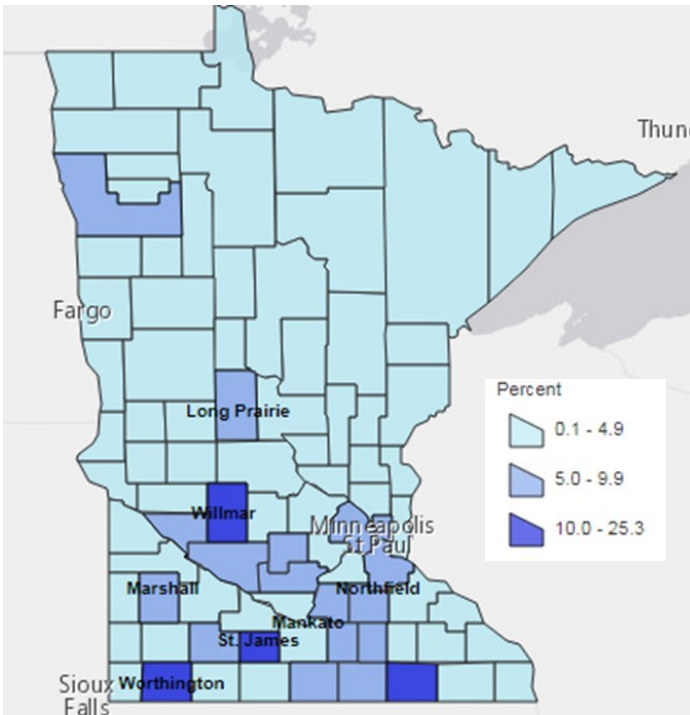
MCLA policy liaisons and executive director searched for common themes in Health, Economic Development, Education, and Immigration across listening sessions and interviews. Although many overarching themes may be addressed at a state level, others would be better addressed at the federal or local level. As such, the findings included in the “Major Findings and Recommendations” section of this report will be directed at statewide challenges and state-based solutions. The “Community Profile” will address some of the local concerns in greater detail to best represent the voices of the listening session participants. We believe that all of these issues are of great importance; however, they may not be directly addressed in MCLA’s legislative agenda in the coming years.

MCLA returned to these cities in October and November 2017 to reconvene with community members who attended the initial community listening sessions. The Council shared the findings and recommendations and solicited feedback from community members. MCLA then used the feedback to validate and enrich this report and furthermore worked with community members to brainstorm ideas for future actions.

OVERVIEW ON LOCATIONS VISITED BY POLICY AREA

Minnesota is a state of 5,419,171, according to estimates by the American Community Survey from 2015.² Approximately 270,984 Minnesotans are Latino or Hispanic, which is about 5% of the total state population.³ Although many Latino Minnesotans reside in the Twin Cities Metro Area, the number of Latinos living in rural Minnesota is growing. Roughly one-third of Minnesotan Latinos live outside the Metro Area,⁴ and certain towns and cities throughout rural Minnesota have become hubs for emerging immigrant communities.⁵ The following section will highlight data trends for Latinos in rural Minnesota, particularly for the cities

Map 1. Latinos as percent of total population by county



ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

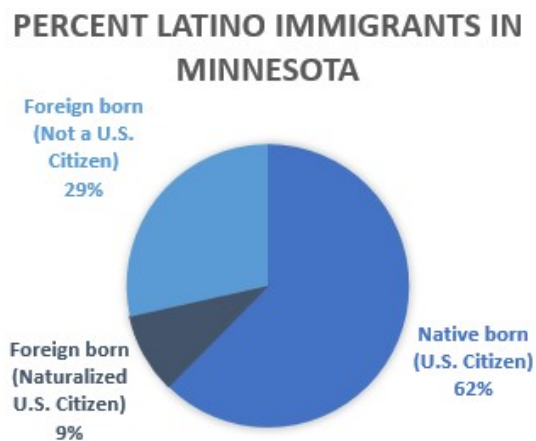
and counties visited by MCLA during its rural community engagement tour. When gathering local data was not possible, this section will show state level data.

The cities visited during MCLA's rural community engagement tour had particularly high percentages of Latino residents. Willmar (Kandiyohi County), Worthington (Nobles County), Marshall (Lyon County), Long Prairie (Todd County), Northfield (Rice County), Mankato (Blue Earth County), and St. James (Watonwan County) have Latino populations ranging from 3% - 40% of the total city population.⁶ The counties that these cities are located in can have a higher percentage of Latinos in the population than the cities because workers may reside closer to their workplaces in agriculture or processing plants that lay outside of the city. This map demonstrates the percent of Latinos in counties across Minnesota, with the cities from MCLA's tour marked in their respective counties.⁷

Immigration

Although many Latinos in Minnesota are immigrants, far more are citizens born in the United States and naturalized citizens. Approximately 62% of all Latinos in Minnesota were born in the U.S., while 38% are foreign-born.⁸ As demonstrated in this graph, just over 70% of Minnesotan Latinos are U.S. citizens.⁹ It's difficult to quantify the exact break-down of Latino immigrants who are not U.S. citizens, because their status could vary from legal permanent resident to temporary status like TPS to undocumented, which is notably more difficult to gauge. A 2014 report estimates that there are 100,000 undocumented persons living in Minnesota, and of these approximately 45% are Mexican-origin.¹¹ A major

Graph 1. Percent of Latino immigrants in Minnesota



ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

challenge in Minnesotan Latino communities is that family members may have different immigration statuses, also known as mixed status families. 92% of Latino children (under 18 years old) in Minnesota are born in the U.S.¹⁰ This leads to problems such as documented family members not being able to extend their insurance to undocumented family. An even greater problem is the constant fear and anxiety that mixed status families experience. Studies show that children of undocumented parents experience trauma and psychological distress, in fear of a parent's detention or deportation.¹² This could be particularly detrimental for young Latinos in Minnesota, if they have undocumented parents who fear appearing in any public space.

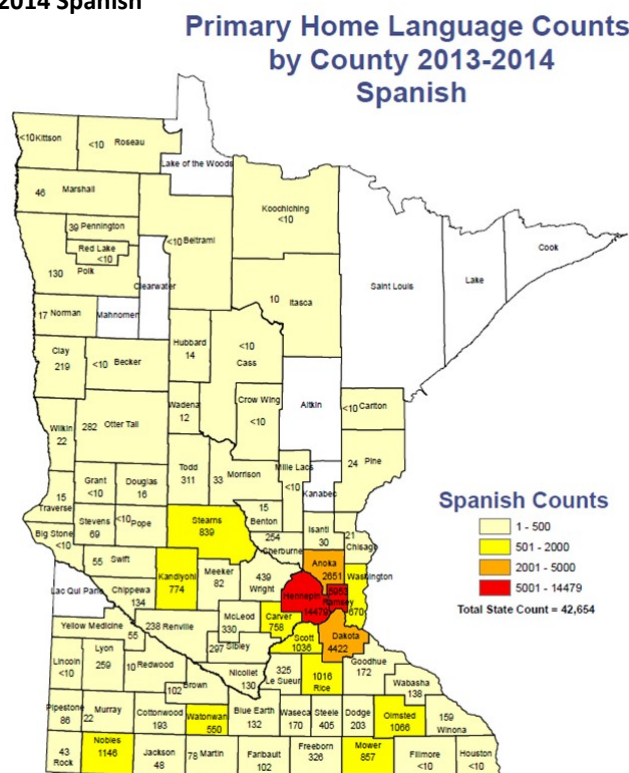
Education

The Latino population in Minnesota is young, with a median age of 24 years old.¹³ This compares to a state-wide median age of 38 years old for all Minnesotans.¹⁴ As such, Latino students compose an increasingly large proportion of Minnesota public schools. As of 2016, there were 75,786 Latino students enrolled in Minnesota schools from early childhood education to 12th grade.¹⁵ This is about 9% of all Minnesota students.¹⁶ In one of the cities MCLA visited in its rural community engagement tour, Long Prairie, about 45% of students in the primary school for the 2015-2016 school year were Latino or Hispanic.¹⁷ This map from the Department of Education shows the number of students in the 2013-2014 school year whose primary language at home is Spanish. The counties visited as part of the rural community engagement tour have particularly high number of Spanish-speaking students: Kandiyohi County with 774, Nobles County with 1,146, Rice County with 1,016, and Watonwan County with 550.¹⁸

Though many school districts respond by hiring cultural liaisons, interpreters, and ELL teachers, funding for such positions is limited. Another limitation in Minnesota is the number of teachers of color in the classroom. Studies show that having teachers of color in the classroom who not only speak students' first language but can relate to their cultural background has a positive effect on students' performance and graduation rate. Throughout Minnesota, there are only 629 Latino teachers, which is just 1% of all the teachers in the state.¹⁹

Low graduation rate of Latino students in Minnesota is another pressing problem, and education inequity leads to continuing inequity with regards to employment and other standards of wellbeing. This has improved in recent years; however, Minnesota still has the lowest high school graduation rate for Latinos in the country with only 66% graduating from high school on time.²⁰ In the cities MCLA visited in its rural community engagement tour, the high school graduation rate for Latino students varied, as demonstrated in the graph on the next page.²¹

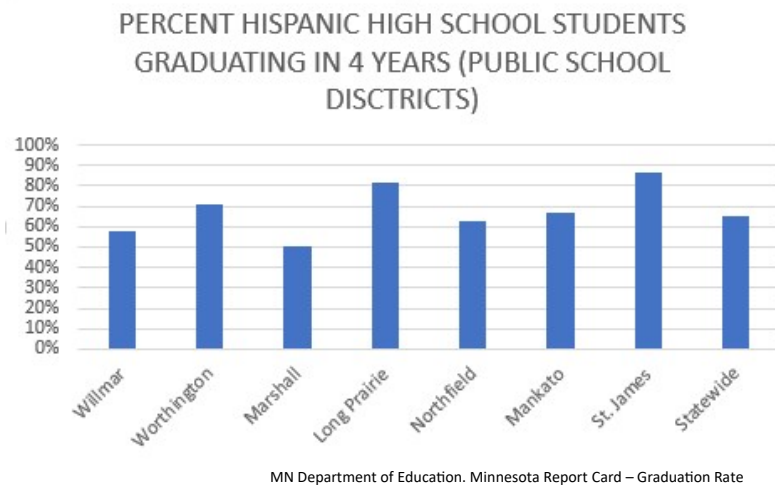
Map 2. Primary Home Language Counts by County 2013 – 2014 Spanish



MN Department of Education. Primary Home Language Counts by County 2013-2014 – Spanish.

Graph 2. 2016 Hispanic 4-year High School Graduation in Public School Districts

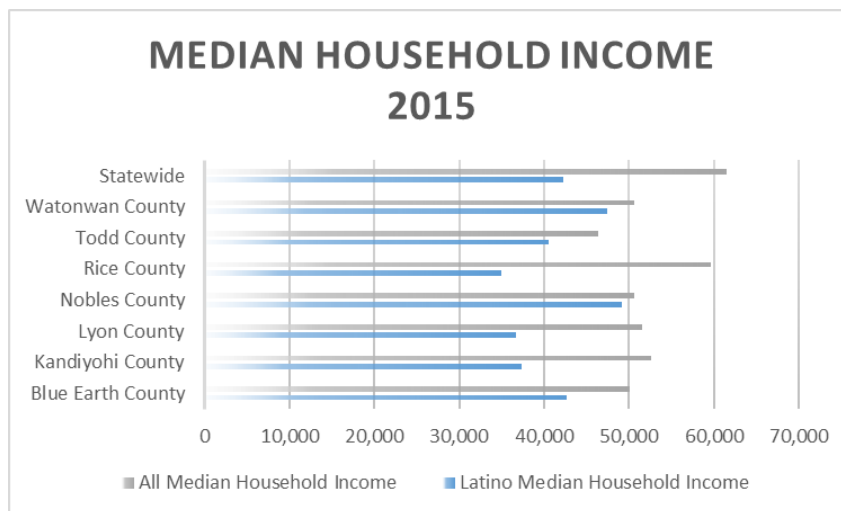
Fewer Latino youth are continuing on to higher education upon graduating high school. Approximately 59% of Minnesotan Latino high school graduates from 2015 enrolled in higher education institutions within 16 months of their graduation, compared to 74% of all high school graduates in Minnesota.²² This is problematic because the Latino population will be under-represented in many higher-paid professions requiring higher education.



Economic Development

Latinos in Minnesota generally have lower incomes, with a median annual household income of \$42,227, than the median Minnesotan household income of \$61,492. This trend holds for the counties visited in MCLA's rural community engagement tour. The following graph demonstrates how this disparity persists across location.

Graph 3. Median Household Income in 2015 by County, All Household and Latino Households



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2015 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS): Households - 2011-2015 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables

Low incomes may be related to what types of jobs Latinos have access to and to what industries have job opportunities in these regions. In the cities visited during MCLA's rural community engagement tour, some of the largest employers were in Education, Healthcare, and Animal Processing. The table on the next page shows the top 5 employers in the cities of Willmar, Worthington, Marshall, Long Prairie, Northfield, Mankato, and St. James.^{24 25 26 27 28 29 30} We do not currently possess a demographic breakdown of employees by ethnicity.

Table 1. Top 5 Employers by City (all races and ethnic groups)

City	First Largest Employer	Second Largest Employer	Third Largest Employer	Fourth Largest Employer	Fifth Largest Employer
Willmar	Jennie-O	Rice Memorial Hospital	ACMC Health	Willmar Public Schools	Life-Science Innovations
Worthington	JBS	School District 518	Prairie Holdings Group	Sanford Medical Group	Walmart
Marshall	The Schwan Food Company	US Bancorp	Avera Marshall	Turkey Valley Farms	Southwest Minnesota State University
Long Prairie	Long Prairie Packing Co.	RR Donnelley	CentraCare Health	Todd County Offices	Dan's Prize Inc.
Northfield	St. Olaf College	Malt-O-Meal	Carleton College	Northfield Public Schools	Multek Flexible Circuitry
Mankato	Taylor Companies	Mayo Clinic Health System	Minnesota State University, Mankato	Mankato Area Public Schools	MRCI
St. James	Smithfield Foods	ISD #840	Watsonwan County	Good Samaritan	Mayo Health Systems

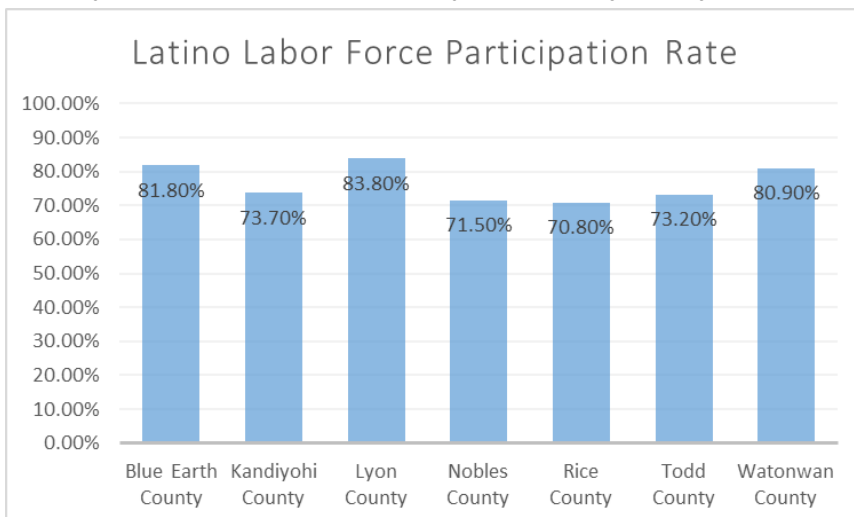
Kandiyohi County Economic Development Commission. "Major Employers."; City of Worthington. "Community Profile."; Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce. "Marshall Area Major Employers."; Long Prairie – Minnesota. "Long Prairie's Leading Employers."; City of Northfield Minnesota. "Comprehensive Plan for Northfield."; Greater Mankato Growth. "Major Employers."; City of St. James, Minnesota "Demographics and Employment Information."

Despite a low median income, most Latinos in Minnesota are working. There is a 75% labor force participation rate among Minnesota Latinos age 16 and over, which is higher than the state average of 70%.³¹ In the counties MCLA visited during its rural community engagement tour, Latino labor force participation rate varied but was always above the state average.

Health

Employment and employee benefits are important to the next topic of health care. Latinos in Minnesota are one of the largest groups without health insurance in the state. Approximately 26% of Minnesotan Latinos do not have health insurance.³² This may be related to the number of undocumented Latinos in the state, who will likely not have health care benefits included with their employment. It may also be due to the type of employment that Latinos in the state have access to, which may be in industries that do

Graph 4. Latino Labor Force Participation Rate by County

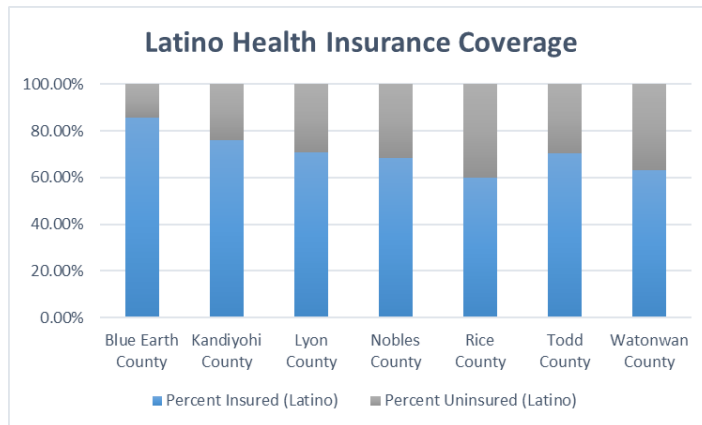


ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

not offer benefits to their employees. The graph on the next page shows the percentage of uninsured vs. insured Latinos in the 7 counties visited during MCLA's rural community engagement tour.³³

Access to insurance results in access to more healthcare providers; therefore, Latinos in Minnesota who do not have health insurance have more limited access to providers. This is particularly problematic in rural areas where there may be only one major provider. If this provider does not accept patients without insurance,

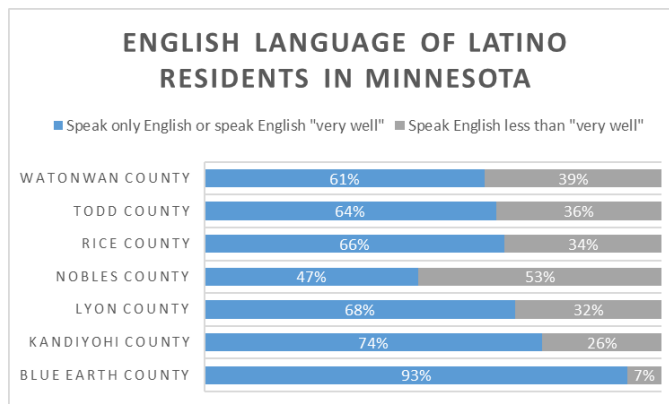
Graph 5. Latino Health Insurance Coverage by County



SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE IN THE UNITED STATES - 2011-2015
American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Medical interpretation is another need in the health field affecting the state's Latino population. Although approximately 67% of Latinos in Minnesota speak English only or speak English "very well", communities with a higher proportion of immigrants may experience language as a barrier to providing adequate healthcare. The Latino communities in the counties visited have a similar need for medical interpretation as the rest of the state, with most of the counties showing that close to or more than a third of Latinos speak English less than very well. Nobles County had a particularly low percentage of residents speaking English, at only 47%, while Blue Earth County had a very high percentage of Latino English-speakers at 93%.³⁶

Graph 6. English Language of Latino Residents in Minnesota

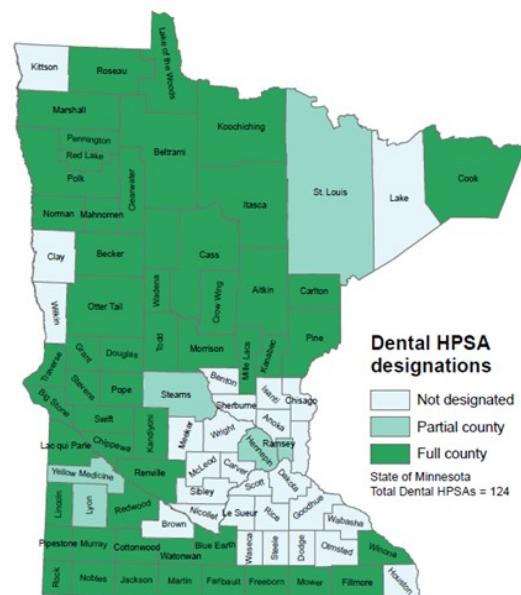


LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER (HISPANIC OR LATINO). Universe: Hispanic or Latino population 5 years and over - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

residents may be forced to go to another city to receive basic health care. This is an even graver issue in cities where health care provider capacity is limited even for those with health insurance, a common phenomenon in this region with regards to dental care.³⁴ Five of the counties in the MCLA rural community engagement tour (Blue Earth, Kandiyohi, Nobles, Todd, Watonwan) are designated as full county Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas, while one is designated as a partial county Shortage Area (Lyon).³⁵

Map 3. Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Low-income Designations, 2014

Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)
Low-Income Designations, 2014



Minnesota Department of Health, Office of Rural Health and Primary Care. "Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)"

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: HEALTH

The health status of Latinos in Greater MN is of great concern to the community members who participated in the listening sessions, as well as health care providers in the region. We found three major themes that impact the health and wellbeing of these communities: immigration status as a barrier to health insurance and affordable health care, language barriers and interpreters, and level of integration (or sense of belonging) in these towns. These themes illustrate some key social determinants of health for rural Latinos. Other factors such as income, education, housing, and transportation are discussed in other sections.

Health Insurance and Health Care Costs

The lack of health insurance due to immigration status was the number one concern of Latinos in the locations visited, followed by the high costs of care (especially of diagnosed conditions and management of chronic diseases). Scarcity of services, especially dental care, was also mentioned. Another condition that participants mentioned as being more prevalent is mental health issues, especially among the youth.

The immigrant experience impacts the community's health possibilities. Many participants stated that immigration status should not be a barrier to accessing health services or to living a healthy life. They stress that this is true whether you are an authorized resident or not. As one participant indicated,

***“It’s different for each person, for each family...
everyone should have access to health and it should be affordable.”***

As a solution, community members mentioned that some type of work permit or identification card for undocumented immigrants would allow them to enroll in employer paid benefits or purchase health insurance. Listening session participants offered examples of other states like California in which undocumented immigrant adults can participate in the state health exchange. Many community members think that undocumented immigrants would be in a financial position to buy insurance, but there is no product available for them to buy. One participant indicated, “I don’t have status, and I don’t have insurance. When I’m sick and I need something... it’s very expensive. We wanted to buy insurance, but no one would sell it to me because they want a social security number.”

Health care providers in the area are aware that Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients can apply for insurance through MNSure if they are employed and fall below certain income criteria for this option. However, there’s still confusion regarding costs and eligibility. Confusion also occurs when employers don’t provide information to their workers that they must enroll in the employer’s insurance plan during certain periods in order to obtain insurance. One health care provider also stated that there may be a gap between different forms of employer paid insurance, and many immigrants don’t realize that they may be eligible for other coverage in these times.

Difficulties navigating the health care system and not being aware of health care costs were also mentioned. The health care system can be confusing for anyone, but may be even more so for people without familiarity with the U.S. health care system or with limited English language abilities. For instance, some families do not have a clear understanding of how insurance works; they don’t realize that they pay for insurance but then still have to pay for other expenses until they reach their deductible.

Preventive health continues to be a vital strategy, especially with Latino residents who are more prone to certain chronic diseases, such as diabetes or obesity. All health providers interviewed shared information about projects in their clinics aimed at nutrition and active lifestyle education; mobile units trying to see patients in different towns; community health workers reaching out to families, and more. Nevertheless, preventive care often means extra doctor visits for screening which translates to a loss of wages and out-of-pocket costs.

Language Barriers and Interpreters

Difficulties accessing healthcare due to lacking insurance and high costs are exacerbated by language concerns. Language continues to be a barrier for many immigrants who either don't speak fluent English, or as happens increasingly, speak neither Spanish nor English. That is the case for new immigrants from Guatemala, many of whom are indigenous and only speak a Mayan language (predominantly K'iche' and Mam). This provides an added layer of complexity which local services and support organizations need to grapple with.

According to participants in some towns, people are more inclined to go to the clinic and seek care if they know that the personnel is bilingual, or that they can trust the interpreters. Phone interpreting also concerns some patients as they are unable to have direct contact with providers to show or explain their specific health conditions or symptoms. One participant mentioned that in some settings family, even children, has to interpret to doctors, putting at risk the health of patients. As one participant indicated,

“The family will be taking notes, and what if they’ve got it wrong? ... But we’re not doctors, we can all speak Spanish, but just because you can speak Spanish doesn’t mean you can translate.”

Many participants acknowledged differences even within the same language, noting that among foreign-born Latinos, there are nuances in the use of certain expressions and words in Spanish. The words for sicknesses or parts of the body may vary by country of origin. This is another reason why they believe it is important to have well trained and culturally competent interpreters in the clinics and hospitals, making sure that interpreters are not only adequately translating medical terminology, but also know about the subtle differences in words for Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, or Guatemalans.

Health care providers that were interviewed support legislation that will help standardize or ensure that all practitioners meet the same requirements to interpret adequately. They also support policies that make sure that translation services are coordinated between different programs and services in both health and human services.

Sense of Belonging: Meaningful Connections Matter

When asked about what they valued most about their life in Minnesota, the vast majority of participants indicated that they like the towns where they live because they feel safe, they enjoy the tranquility, and found them to be a quiet and good place to raise their families. Many said that they appreciate the change of seasons, and if they were equipped with the right information and resources, they would be able to take advantage of the opportunities they did not find in other states or countries of origin.

The majority of listening session participants have lived in these towns for more than 10 years, and their children were born in Minnesota. However, many of them expressed that their towns frequently lack effective support networks, infrastructure, and proper channels for them to find a sense of belonging and integration, whether in the community, workplaces, or public settings like schools and health and human services.



MCLA Health Policy Liaison, Rosa Tock speaking with community members in Long Prairie, MN

Although already present in more subtle ways, some participants indicated an increase in more overt racism in 2017. Some participants mentioned structural racism as a major barrier to both better education and better health outcomes. One participant indicated that as long as immigrants remain in their place (which they define as not being visible in public spaces, not making demands, and assimilating) the situation is acceptable to the majority. However, as soon as they want to achieve and aspire to the same expectations as the majority white and well-established population, through better working conditions, equity in access to services, and social mobility, resistance and barriers start to build up.

Another participant mentioned the example of an international student soccer club that wanted to use a space to train. After being denied that chance by the university, they reached out to a local gym although it took them months to gain access to the restrooms and locker rooms. As one community member expressed,

“I’ve heard racist comments constantly in the university... I was speaking Spanish with someone while playing volleyball, and I was hit with a ball by someone who told me to stop speaking Spanish, because ‘now you’re in America.’”

In all towns, participants feel the need to work in collaboration across cultural and national origin identities within the same Latino community. In some towns like Northfield and Marshall, participants talked about the need to organize, to have civic engagement trainings, and the importance of political participation. Participants also talked about unity and the importance of working together to improve their socio-economic conditions and achieve their overall goals. They recognize that they may have different levels of opportunity than the racial majority community, but they also acknowledge the tensions that exist within the Latino community, as a result of misunderstandings, assumptions, and lack of direct communication with more recent arrivals from Central American countries and Puerto Rico.

Recommendations

Community listening session participants and community leaders in health expressed the need for improvement in the following areas: 1) Improving access to health insurance and affordable healthcare; 2) Lessening language barriers through quality interpreters; and 3) Ensuring a sense of belonging in communities. In light of these findings, we make the following recommendations to decision-makers:

- **Continue advocating for bill HF2030/SF1708 “Spoken language health care interpreters registry” that will replace the current interpreters’ roster:** The system includes two categories for increased professional recognition (registered or certified) and its purpose is to reduce disparities in health care outcomes for patients with limited English proficiency.
- **Support community health clinics and multicultural centers with state grants:** Clinics and centers can coordinate the multiple services for newcomers in rural towns and grants can fund the operation of mobile units offering preventive care services, including dental care.
- **Support MNSure and culturally relevant MNSure Navigators to help individuals and family members access health insurance.**
- **Support Equity Policies and/or Health in All Policies:** These policies encourage inclusiveness in the policy-making process.
- **Support structures that allow Latino representation on the City Council and other public boards that can function as a liaison between Latinos and government:** Partnerships between local nonprofits, government, and foundations are essential to increase civic engagement and representation to bring forth solutions that can improve the overall wellbeing of Latino communities.

- **Promote preventive healthy living initiatives:** Access to physical and recreational activities, as well as improvement in nutrition and access to fresh food, will help decrease health disparities.
- **Support local initiatives aiming at allowing more individuals to opt for health insurance regardless of immigration status.**
- **Continue advocating for the Affordable Care Act and reforms that will not dismantle recent progress:** Progress includes expanded access to health care programs and insurance through Medicaid expansion for vulnerable populations. Support models that generally provide access to health care for all, such as a universal health care model.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Latino community is integral to the strength of Minnesota's economy, with Latinos having the highest labor force participation rate in the state. However, despite being the most actively working community in the state, many members of the Latino community struggle with below average incomes and higher than normal poverty rates. Three themes overwhelmed MCLA's discussions with community members and local workforce centers: entrepreneurial assistance, affordable housing, and limitations for people without a social security number (SSN).

Entrepreneurial Assistance

An entrepreneurial spirit and values of hard work and self-sufficiency define the economic drive of many Minnesotan Latinos. A listening session participant said, "I think all Hispanics have this mentality that we want to have freedom to work...to do what we need to do." Although this drive for economic self-sufficiency is strong, there are real barriers that prevent many Latinos from fulfilling their economic goals. The two main barriers that arose during the listening sessions were 1) assistance and knowledge about how to start a small business and 2) an inability to access bank loans.

"I think all Hispanics have this mentality that we want to have freedom to work...to do what we need to do."

In almost every listening session, at least one participant brought up that they wanted to start their own business. However, many have faced roadblocks in achieving this goal. A Latina business owner told her story by describing a challenging process of banks unwilling to provide loans to immigrants, as well as a story of deception by a local community organization that never provided the funding they promised. Her story is not unique, and this reality has played out for many Latinos that want to start their own business.

The second significant barrier was the inability to access bank loans. Many of the participants that attended listening sessions discussed how they either did not have a favorable credit score, or simply had their application for a loan rejected by the bank. These barriers are heightened for individuals who do not have a SSN.

Affordable Housing

Housing struggles were voiced often during community listening sessions, and they were strongly underscored by conversations with both state and nonprofit workforce centers. One listening session participant could not have been clearer when he said, "There aren't enough houses to rent or buy." It should be noted that currently in Minnesota, housing challenges impact every region of the state along with many diverse populations and communities.

"There aren't enough houses to rent or buy."

Latinos in Greater Minnesota face a housing crisis that includes a simple lack of available apartments or houses to buy in addition to unaffordability of housing if anything is in fact available. A workforce center employee detailed a story about a local meat packing plant that now needs to bus workers in from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, because there is no available housing in the Worthington area. Access to affordable housing is uniquely challenging to some large Latino families, because there are few apartments available that have more than two bedrooms.

Participants talked about immigrants (particularly men) living in crowded houses or apartments, and others still in trailers in the outskirts of the towns visited. Some participants believed that with more people wanting to live closer to city centers because of the proximity to schools and work, along with lack of adequate transportation, rent has continued to increase without an improvement in living conditions.



MCLA Economic Development Policy Liaison, Eric Armacanqui speaking with community members in Mankato, MN

Another housing barrier for some Latinos revolves around not having a SSN. It is particularly challenging to buy a house or rent an apartment without a SSN. Many of these families have lived and worked in the region for years and have built families all while not having a SSN. One listening session participant said, “There are many Hispanics in the trailers. They don’t have other options; if they don’t have a social security number, they can’t buy. They are also worried that if they buy a place, they’re not going to have it if they get deported.”

Some landlords are aware of their tenants’ immigration status and that overcrowding of their living quarters has dilapidated housing conditions. However, they still keep those tenants and maintain high rent rates because they know their tenants don’t have other options. One community organizer said, “I have visited Latino families in their apartments and I can’t even stay for more than 5 minutes because I can’t breathe because of all the mold ... People don’t complain about anything, because they are afraid to upset the landlords and have them report them to ICE.”

Social Security Number Limitations

Although individuals without a social security number may be affected with regards to housing and banking, they are particularly affected by the topic of low wages. In each listening session, the relationship between having a SSN and economic development were passionately discussed. A listening session participant said, “All finances go around a social security number.” Listening session participants in each city recounted either personal stories or stories of their friends or family members about the economic realities of not having a SSN. Individuals have been living, working, and contributing to their respective communities for years. However, because some may not have a SSN, they are stuck in a low wage job or in a position with no upward mobility. This in turn prevents some individuals and their families from building wealth.

“All finances go around a social security number.”

The repercussions are that many Latinos work hard and hold one or more jobs, but these jobs are inherently low wage due to their immigration status. This economic reality affects other facets of life. When someone has to work long shifts or hold multiple jobs, they do not have the time to access available resources from workforce centers or local nonprofits. In speaking with various workforce centers, many stated that they struggle to adapt their resources or do proper outreach to the Latino community. One workforce center said, “We are the best kept secret in town.” However, a Latino resident explained it by saying that “the problem is that people are always working and there aren’t programs for people on Saturday, on a schedule that would be possible for them.” This reveals that a lack of economic upward mobility causes many Latinos to hold jobs with long hours and low wages, which in turn prevents them from having the time to access resources, because these resources are not available during the limited free time that they have.

Recommendations

Feedback from community listening sessions in southern and central Minnesota and interviews with various state and nonprofit workforce centers show that three major barriers to economic development for the Latino community are: 1) A need for more entrepreneurial assistance; 2) Lack of affordable housing; and 3) Economic limitations for individuals without a social security number. To address these problems through legislation, MCLA will advocate for the following legislative and policy advancements:

- **Support a bonding bill that has significant allocations to housing development:** A bonding bill with significant allocations to housing will help the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency to not only increase the supply of housing but also stabilize affordable housing in communities throughout the state. This will benefit communities in need of more housing, as well as those that have existing public housing that requires rehabilitation.
- **Recommend that more funding be allocated for the Department of Employment and Economic Development's Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program (ELP):** In the case where there is additional budget surplus allocated to the Jobs and Economic Development Committee, MCLA will advocate for more funding to be allocated to the ELP program. This will allow DEED to provide more loans to emerging Latino/a entrepreneurs throughout the state.
- **Encourage policy changes to state grants that disadvantage new or small nonprofits:** There are many vital Latino-focused nonprofits throughout Minnesota. Although these nonprofits do great work, some are new and/or small in size, and thus do not yet have the track record or infrastructure in place to qualify for some state grants. This exclusion can prevent these nonprofits from expanding their important services.
- **Advocate for innovative policy changes to allow for the use of an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) in lieu of a Social Security Number (SSN):** Individuals that have a job and file taxes, but do not have a social security number, apply for an ITIN. In order to have an ITIN, someone is employed and is filing state and federal taxes. MCLA will advocate for innovative but responsible ways to allow ITINs to substitute for SSNs in certain situations. One example is to allow Minnesotans with an ITIN to apply for a homestead classification.
- **Support legislation to strengthen policies to prevent Wage Theft:** Wage theft occurs when employers do not pay employees what is owed to them for the work performed. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry estimates that at least 39,000 workers suffer from wage theft each year in Minnesota. This totals at least \$11.9 million dollars in back wages owed. MCLA will advocate for strong policy language that will combat wage theft in Minnesota.
- **Advocate measures that increase Latino homeownership:** Increasing homeownership is of great interest to the Latino community. However, among the many obstacles a mixed status family with no primary Social Security Number face in Minnesota is being over-taxed. The Homeowner Tax Credit Equity Act would allow for all Minnesota homeowners to file for a homestead tax credit with their federal Tax Identification Number.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: EDUCATION

As the fastest growing, and one of the youngest, demographic groups of the state, Minnesota's economic competitiveness and socioeconomic outcomes depend in part on Latinos' educational attainment. While progress has been made in closing the achievement and opportunity gaps that disproportionately impact Latinos, much work remains to further narrow these gaps. The impact of our education systems on Latino communities was of high interest to the community members, school cultural/family liaisons, superintendents, principals, education-related nonprofits and collaboratives that MCLA met with during its visits. Addressing disparities requires a comprehensive effort, so while this report cannot include all concerns, three major themes regarding education emerged: support for students by teachers and school staff, support from parents, and barriers to higher education. The third theme was closely followed by opportunity gap issues: language, extracurriculars, transportation, race/ethnicity, and early childhood.

Student Support by Teachers and Staff

All communities identified a shortage of Latino, bilingual, and/or cross-culturally competent educators as a concern. Some parents commented that their children have had only one or no Latino teachers throughout their trajectory in school. One community listening session reported no Latino teachers in a district where Latino children are nearing 50 percent of the district's enrollment. This shortage places limits on student development and success, in addition to exacerbating the barriers to parental involvement. It particularly impacts students when they don't see role models who reflect their background. One administrator stated, "When I walk into a classroom and I don't see someone who looks like me, what is there to look forward to? This is particularly difficult for boys." Another outcome of this shortage is that students are sometimes expected to translate for other children, taking the translating students away from their own development.

Latino teachers can also be the students' best advocates. One participant recounted her daughter's experience when she tried to enroll in an advanced English course. The participant said, "She got a letter that she qualified for it, but when I saw her schedule they didn't put her into the advanced English... So I spoke with a teacher who speaks Spanish, and ... he said that he would see how he could help. And we were told that she couldn't get into the class because there were very few who could get into this level as Latinos. So the teacher said, 'No, she has the capacity, she has to be there.' So it took him some work but if they hadn't she might have just given up on English - she wouldn't have been motivated to do it anymore. This is a barrier that we as Latinos face, because they don't think that we have the capacity. So the teachers should help; the teacher who helped was a Hispanic teacher."

Aside from having more Latino teachers, there is a need for all teachers to work more effectively cross-culturally. A community member explained the situation –

"Many places, many rural towns, half of the students are Latinos and it's not represented in the school districts as it should be in line with the students. [We need to] contract teachers who speak Spanish, but also have teachers who are culturally educated, who will say to our children, you can be educated as a lawyer, a doctor, instead of saying to them, you're going to be a mechanic, a stylist. It's not bad, right, but why not dream that our children could be more?"

Participants identified barriers to having educators of color: 1) Cuts in school personnel affecting the few Latino teachers and staff who tend to be newer and therefore have less seniority; 2) Hiring practices in which there is potential that very qualified Latino teachers are available but are not being hired due to limited district finances and potentially discriminatory practices; 3) Not enough Latino youth making it to higher education in the first place; 4) Inability of the districts to attract young professionals to rural communities; and 5) Licensing barriers for teachers due to a variety of factors such as skills tests. One participant shared that "many people come as teachers, but they can't become teachers here even if they want to."

Latino teachers or teachers of color do not guarantee bilingual access or cross-cultural competence, but in

their absence, a great deal of responsibility is shifted to paraprofessionals, particularly cultural or family liaisons. Growing diversification of other staff, including paraprofessionals, liaisons, and interpreters is a bright spot for some schools. However, the limited number of culturally-aware, bilingual school staff makes these individuals serve as counselors, college coaches, translators, health advocates, housing advocates, city council liaisons, police liaisons, community ambassadors, parents, taxis, and overall community navigators often on a 24/7 basis, even during the summer when they are “technically not working.” When asked why they don’t stop working during the summer or after hours, the answers clearly show their passion and commitment: “Relationships. You cannot have a relationship with a family, stop talking to them over the summer or evenings, especially if they have a need and have nowhere else to go, and expect to get them to continue to trust you or pick up right where you left off. It would be detrimental to the family and the student.” They are a strength in our school systems to be replicated and amplified.

Student Support by Parents

Latino parental involvement in their children’s education was another concern that participants primarily related to language barriers but also to a lack of information and system understanding, economic and inclusion barriers. Some Latino parents struggle with the English language, and they need better access to Adult ELL classes to attain the language skills that will help them participate in their children’s education. All administrators cited the difficulty of finding sufficient bilingual staff and translators, particularly during conferences. However, some community members shared the improvements they had seen with increased translators, online translation, and cultural liaisons, and were very grateful for the efforts. The community also reported more parents attending school meetings, even when the perception may be that Latino parents don’t attend them. One school administrator was straightforward in negating this belief, citing that Latino parents are often more involved in the schools than any other group.

A lack of system understanding and information regarding the needs of students was another concern for community members. Some feel greater priority needs to be given to parents’ participation and that learning for the parents needs to be priority, stressing the need for multigenerational strategies. One contributes, “I’ve lived here for 30 years. I’ve seen changes in the education, in everything and I think people are becoming more tolerant. But I think that lack of education, not of children, but of adults affects us. A lot of adults here aren’t educated and not integrated.” Parents expressed a need for more translated information about how the educational system works to know how they can support their children in this system. Some parents also voiced concerns about not feeling welcome at schools. One participant stated that they felt included in conferences but not at other community-building events that were held only in English.

Aside from some of the language and cross-cultural barriers mentioned, economic barriers were particularly salient as the types of industries that

draw many employees to the region require shift work that can be inflexible and draw parents day and night. One parent spoke of the impotence of wanting to participate but being faced with the demands of survival and the drive to work even harder to give their children more opportunities. “The matter of education in our community is very difficult. Many of us come from poor places, poor communities, and we come with a dream of getting ahead with our children. Of living better with our children. Be a family. We arrive here and we get a job



MCLA Education Policy Liaison, Violeta Hernández Espinosa speaking with community members in Willmar, MN

where they tell us, you're going to go in at 5:00 in the morning and leave at 5:00 in the evening. We leave tired from work.... A big problem we face as a community is our salaries ... the rent, the books, that little by little we need more, we need to earn more to make sure that our children come out ahead."

Access to Higher Education

Limited system knowledge also contributes to the continued difficulty for Latino students transitioning into higher education. For many students who may be the first in their families to attend 2- or 4-year colleges and universities, there is little knowledge of what to look for in a school, how to apply, and where to go for financial aid. Community members indicated that students need individualized assistance in this process but that school counselors' capacity is often limited or help is simply not available in students' or parents' first language. Little is known in some of these districts, for example, about the MN Dream Act which permits Deferred Action-eligible students to pay in-state tuition at Minnesota public colleges and universities and have access to state grants and work-study whether attending a private or public college. Another problem is that when there are advising services at a college that are specific to Latinos, high schools don't necessarily try to facilitate opportunities for students to participate in them.

"It's very difficult to complete when a payment for university can cost \$20,000. You get disheartened and then really you start to think that your role as an immigrant is to work."

Once students are enrolled in higher education, they also face barriers to completion, especially economic barriers. One participant stated that "it's very difficult to complete when a payment for university can cost \$20,000. You get disheartened and then really you start to think that your role as an immigrant is to work." Other barriers may be cultural, such as parents preferring that their college students remain at home when campuses have an on-campus policy for students. Mentoring for first-generation college students was also mentioned as a way to retain students in these 2- and 4-year programs.

Addressing the Opportunity Gap

The opportunity gap refers to the ways that factors one cannot control, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, create limited opportunities and resources during childhood that contribute to unequal or lower achievement in academics and work later in life. Language barriers continue to be a concern for many Latino students. Lack of resources, financial and human, continue to make fully meeting the needs of ELL's a challenge, in addition to the vast diversity of some communities - one community has over 28 languages spoken in their schools. A school administrator talked about funding limits for ELL programming being restricted to 6 years, which works for younger students, but not necessarily for older ones.

Extracurricular activities were also of high interest to most of the communities visited. Several community members expressed frustration that a favorite Latin American sport, soccer, was often excluded from school and community sport offerings despite demand from the communities. Fees were another barrier to access extracurricular sports, and this barrier was especially felt by larger families. Cultural liaisons noted that summer activities and summer school are needed to continue providing learning opportunities year-round and prevent loss of knowledge, but these communities see a shortage of said programs.

Lack of transportation was mentioned in most of the communities as a barrier to accessing pre-school programs, K-12 school, extracurricular activities and programming (adult and youth). The lack of transportation in schools was attributed to a lack of funding and legislation that did not give schools and communities the ability to use funding or targeted revenue streams for transportation. The lack of reliable, flexible, or even existent forms of public transportation amplifies the impact of this barrier, especially considering that some rural schools can be quite far from residential areas.

The Latino and immigrant communities directly acknowledged a recent increase in the overt and covert discrimination and bias felt in schools and communities. This topic was the undertone of various listening session conversations, and it's important because it affects community mental health and students' esteem.

Several examples of this were given by parents, children, school staff, and the few Latinos that are now in decision-making roles; the latter expressed their inability to push for broad changes in this regard, feeling at times that their suggestions are not considered. While improvement in this area was also cited by many, some school administrators recognized the need to overcome these challenges, not only in the schools, but in the greater community, as schools are responsive to the community where they are located.

A final topic, mentioned in more than one community but to a lesser extent, includes Pre-K and daycare. The comments centered on the very limited capacity or availability of Pre-K opportunities (particularly Headstart), the high cost of Pre-K as a barrier to access even with subsidies, and a lack of transportation to transport children to existing programs. A related topic was the lack of daycare preventing parents from attending work, cultural, and educational opportunities, especially in the evenings. This barrier was heightened for single parents and women.

Recommendations

Participants in community listening sessions and school educators and administrators revealed three major areas of focus for education needs of the Latino communities: 1) Student support from teachers and staff; 2) Student support by parents; and 3) Barriers to higher education and other opportunity gap issues. MCLA recommends the following in order to address these findings:

- **Maintain and increase public school funding and targeted funds:** Greater aid for lower-income districts. Funding for equitable access to education can be addressed by protecting Compensatory funding, increasing Integration funding, and increasing General funding, including that for transportation.
- **Continue advocating for measures to increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers:** Address the serious shortage of these teachers statewide. While the ideal is more bilingual, culturally-competent teachers, teachers that reflect their students' backgrounds is a step in the right direction.
- **Advocate for greater cross-cultural competence and trauma-informed practice in educators, staff, and administration:** Schools must be more aware of other cultures and experiences of immigrants, whether this is through ethnic studies, trauma and cross-cultural competence trainings, or changes at educator colleges and universities. This would address diversity, racism, and inclusion concerns.
- **Show support for cultural liaisons and community navigators:** These key positions are pivotal to fill some of the gap from the deep teacher of color shortage in Minnesota and general shortage of culturally-aware, bilingual professionals in these communities. This practice is already working well and should be replicated with better pay, resources, and recognition for individuals doing this work.
- **Improve college access for Latino youth:** While high school graduation rates have improved, access to college is still lacking. It can be increased through greater financial aid to help mitigate the cost of college, programming to advise high school students that is more intensive or one-to-one, and including parents in the process. The MN Dream Act should be protected and improved.
- **Address language needs of the Latino community:** Providing interpreters for parents whose second language is English or translated documents would have a large impact on parental involvement at all levels. Also, opportunities for adults to learn English (and Spanish) should be introduced or expanded.
- **Advocate for more funding in the English Language Learners (ELL) programs:** In addition to better funding, find solutions that will benefit ELL students. The increased focus on ELL students as a result of the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act is a step in the right direction. Continue to monitor state plan implementation efforts, including standardization of ELL program entrance and exit criteria.
- **Improve childcare and pre-kindergarten access:** Continue to support Head Start, a key program for Latino families. Addressing the general lack of capacity to provide these services and high cost of pre-kindergarten alternatives are crucial to improve the Latino experience in early care and education.
- **Expand multigenerational approaches:** It is clear that the student experience cannot be separated from family experience. We must continue to support multigenerational approaches to close generational poverty cycles and to narrow opportunity and educational achievement gaps.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: IMMIGRATION

Minnesota has a rich history of welcoming immigrants and refugees. The stories that immigrants tell their children and new neighbors have many similarities, as they all aspire to have a better life for their family. Nevertheless, recently arriving Latinos and those who are not so recent arrivals expressed many hardships during our listening sessions about how current immigration laws impact them and their families on an everyday basis. Most of them expressed a sense of anxiety, stress, unease, and fear. In the short amount of time MCLA was able to spend with each group, we were able to build some trust and hear that the composition of the groups was made up of undocumented individuals, citizens, legal residents, and families with mixed immigration status. Many undocumented individuals fear for their native-born children and their future. A participant who is a mother of two said,

“I am a single mother, and I’m always worried. Although I have a work permit, one looks at the news, and you’re always afraid that something’s going to happen.”

The uncertainty with national politics has made even those who are documented feel insecure about their future in Minnesota. With the current anti-immigrant and anti-Latino political discourse at the national level, Latinos feel targeted or under threat. U.S. born children whose parents might have mixed immigration status are stressed and anxious. Some children are afraid to go to school, or their parents do not go to health clinics for standard medical care for fear of being deported. Recurrent concerns about mental health issues among children and teenagers were raised by participants. Some state lawmakers are sensitive to the needs of undocumented residents but delay taking local action, arguing that first immigration reform must take place at the federal level. Fear related to raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are impacting individuals’ access to health care and preventive services. Also, some providers interviewed mentioned that people do not want to be in the system as they are afraid that they will be targeted by ICE.

Lack of Political Representation in the Communities

Despite feelings of anxiety and fear, many community members expressed a desire to become more involved as leaders in their community and stated their frustration that it was difficult for them to do so. A participant who has lived in Minnesota for eight years said,

“We are a town of immigrants but city council is made up of all white members because many like myself don’t have the right to vote and therefore we’re not represented here.”

Lack of political representation was pervasive in the seven communities the Council visited. The only publicly elected officials that identified as Latino that MCLA was able to connect with were City Council member Fernando Alvarado from Willmar and St. James school board member Luisa Tropero, both of whom expressed an interest in helping promote more Latino civic participation. They also wanted to make sure that the needs of the Latino community are met. Luisa, as the only Latina, Spanish-speaking board member in the district, finds herself answering many parent questions that would be more suited for district staff but for which parents go to her, because she can communicate directly with them. Nevertheless, she is happy to be a resource to parents and an unofficial cultural liaison to the district.

We also met with several mayors and other elected officials from these communities. They all described the Latino community as hard working and good neighbors. One mayor stated, “The Latino community might have been new 20 - 25 years ago but now many Latino families have made this home and their children were all born here and we need them to stay and continue to pay taxes to support this community.”

Transportation

Lack of adequate public transportation was a major concern for community members. Due to undocumented status, many community members are unable to obtain a driver’s license and therefore unable to drive.



MCLA Executive Director and Immigration Liaison, Henry Jiménez speaking with community members in St. James, MN

The infrequency and limited hours that city busses operate make it hard to meet the work commute needs of the Latino community. The bus line also does not extend to where the meat packing plants and other employment opportunities are located. Some participants also stated that the bus routes do not come close to their home.

This creates additional barriers when it comes to accessing health care, especially for services with few providers in the area such as

dental care, and education, if children live within the zone that makes them ineligible for free bussing and do not have access to public transportation. The demand for transportation is so high and unable to be met by local public transit that an underground or unregistered taxi service market emerged in one of the locations MCLA visited. Although several participants stated they do not want to drive without a license, they have no viable options.

Access to Driver's Licenses and Municipal Identification Cards

One of the top issues for the Latino community is access to driver's licenses for all who can meet the requirements to obtain a driver's licenses regardless of immigration status. This has been in the spotlight since 2003, and it became apparent in each listening session that it was still a top priority for the Latino community regardless of their immigration status. Many of the participants seemed to be aware that at some point recently, Minnesota did allow undocumented immigrants the opportunity to obtain a driver's license. They have advocated in support of driver's licenses and have met with their legislators to express how not being able to drive impacts their everyday lives. Several participants stated that they were able to get a public commitment from their local legislator in support of driver's licenses, but to later be disappointed that the legislator supported contrary legislation at the time to vote.

Many people do not drive because they fear that they will be pulled over, ticketed or worse, be detained and later reported to ICE. Several of the participants also expressed that driver's licenses is a safety issue. It would be safer for everyone if undocumented immigrants were allowed to apply for a driver's license because they would go through the same driving tests as everyone else, as well as purchasing car insurance, which would keep Minnesota roads safer and insurance premiums lower.

In our visits we also met with several police chiefs and sheriffs. They all have a clear understanding of the lack of driver's licenses by undocumented immigrants in their jurisdictions. Although, they do not want to see individuals driving without a driver's licenses, they seemed to understand the harsh reality undocumented immigrants face on a daily basis and why many of them do drive without a license. They reminded us that both the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association and the Minnesota Sheriffs Association have endorsed driver's licenses for all who qualify, regardless of their immigration status.

In locations like Northfield, a group of Latino advocates along with a community group named Neighbors United have begun to advocate for a municipal identification card that could be used by undocumented immigrants but would not take the place of a state –issued identification card or driver's license. Their municipal identification card would be valid for use with their local police department, access to public buildings like schools, taking high school equivalency exams, and it could also be used to open a bank account at financial institutions that would accept municipal identification cards. They have taken this initiative to their

city council and will be expecting a vote by the end of the year. This is in response to the lack of progress on driver's licenses for all at the state level.

Recommendations

Community members who attended listening sessions and local community leaders indicated that three major areas of concern with regards to immigration are: 1) A lack of political representation in communities; 2) Limited access to transportation; and 3) Access to driver's licenses and municipal identification cards. Based on what we heard from community members, the Council will recommend the following:

- **Promote Safe Roads and Highways:** Access to driver's licenses for all regardless of immigration status and oppose any targeted efforts to limit this access. The impact on U.S. born citizen children is too great and the safety of all Minnesotans too important to neglect this issue.
- **Introduce Municipal Identification Cards:** While many immigrants can benefit from Consulates of their respective country of origin, most do not. Identifications cards are an important everyday need and something that not all new Minnesotans have access to due to the current inability of undocumented immigrants to access state-issued identification cards. The Council supports municipalities and other local entities that establish their own forms of identifications cards for their residents.
- **Extend reliable public transportation routes to and from employment hubs, especially during shift changes at local manufacturing plants.**
- **Increase public transportation services between municipalities.**
- **Support creation of Governor's Commission on New Minnesotans:** The purpose of the commission is to assist and advise the Governor's office to explore and implement immediate actions to protect Minnesotan immigrant families and to further the state's economic vitality through an understanding that immigrant communities are very much a part of Minnesota's future.
- **Increase Resources for New Minnesotans:** Support efforts to increase resources to New Minnesotans such as Adult Basic Education, not just to refugees, but extending it to any Minnesotan that would like to continue their basic education. This includes extending access to students who are at least 21 years of age but not yet 24 years of age and is an English learner with an interrupted formal education to be eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program, job training and other adult education programming.
- **Increase Citizenship:** Earning potential increases for individuals that become citizens. With over 100,000 Minnesotans eligible to become U.S. citizens, Minnesota should consider investing in these families. The Citizenship Opportunity Act would provide a tax credit for citizenship applicants who are below 200% of the poverty line.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: WILLMAR

Willmar is a city located in Kandiyohi County in central Minnesota. As of 2015, the estimated population of Willmar was 19,685. Approximately 21% of Willmar's population identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic. MCLA's community listening session in Willmar was held on June 6, 2017. An estimated 35 people, including children, participated in the listening session, and of these 18 chose to complete MCLA's demographic survey.

Six men and twelve women responded to the survey. The average age was 31.4 years old, ranging from 12 to 70. Ten of the participants were born in the United States while the other six were originally from other countries. Eleven were completely fluent in English and seven were not fully fluent. Ten participants stated that they were currently employed, five said that they were not currently employed, and three chose not to respond. Twelve of the participants had children.



Other Local Concerns

In addition to the major findings described elsewhere in this report, community members emphasized the following issues which were corroborated during the second phase of our visits to validate findings:

- **Access to Dental Care:** Residents of Willmar and the surrounding area have severely limited access to dental care, both for those with and without dental insurance. Many providers will not accept patients without insurance, and those who will are often located at a great distance from Willmar residents.
- **Transportation to School:** Students living within two miles of Willmar schools don't qualify for free transportation, and this wide radius is often an impossible distance for children to walk, especially during the winter. This leaves parents responsible for arranging expensive private transportation to school or sacrificing time away from work to provide transportation themselves.
- **School Lunches and college scholarships:** Students explained that they did not have enough time to eat their lunches and wished that this time could be extended. Parents suggested that greater financial aid for college is needed.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: WORTHINGTON



Worthington is a city located in Nobles County in south western Minnesota. As of 2015, the estimated population of Worthington was 12,990. Approximately 40% of Worthington's population identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic. MCLA's community listening session in Worthington was held on June 7, 2017. Two people participated in this session and both chose to complete MCLA's demographic survey.

One man and one woman responded to the survey. The average age was 36.5 years old, ranging from 35 to 38. One of the participants was born in the United States and the other was originally from another country. One was completely fluent in English and the other was not fully fluent. Both participants were currently employed, and they both had children.

Other Local Concerns

In addition to the major findings described elsewhere in this report, community members emphasized the following issues:

- **Inadequate Affordable Housing:** Families, especially low-income families, have a difficult time finding affordable housing in Worthington. This may be related to large family size and the cost of larger units, but immigration status and lack of a social security number is also cited as a barrier to housing.
- **Beneficial Free Clinic:** A free health clinic, Our Lady of Guadalupe, has been a valuable resource for low-income residents of Worthington, especially those without health insurance. This program has been particularly helpful for residents who don't have a social security number and therefore cannot benefit from MNSure.
- **Students Need Additional Support:** Latino students need to be receiving additional support at school and also from their parents to keep them motivated about continuing their education.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: MARSHALL

Marshall is a city located in Lyon County in south western Minnesota. As of 2015, the estimated population of Marshall was 13,608. Approximately 9% of Marshall's population identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic. MCLA's community listening session in Marshall was held on June 9, 2017. An estimated 25 people, including children, participated in the listening session, and of these 16 chose to complete MCLA's demographic survey.

Seven men and nine women responded to the survey. The average age was 41.9 years old, ranging from 14 to 73. One of the participants was born in the United States, 14 were originally from other countries, and one chose not to respond. Seven were completely fluent in English, eight were not fully fluent, and one chose not to respond. Eight participants stated that they were currently employed, seven said that they were not currently employed, and one chose not to respond. Eleven of the participants had children.



Other Local Concerns

In addition to the major findings described elsewhere in this report, community members emphasized the following issues which were corroborated during the second phase of our visits to validate findings:

- **Limited Pre-school Capacity:** Pre-school programs have limited capacity for new students. Once the Head Start program is at capacity, parents' only remaining option is an expensive private pre-school, which also fills quickly.
- **Latino Voice in the Community:** Many participants at the listening session indicated that Latinos are under-represented in leadership roles in the community, and that this often results in their concerns not being paid much attention. The participants also believed that not feeling like they have a voice in the community can make them feel unintegrated and disconnected.
- **Difficulty Finding a Health Provider:** It can be difficult for Latino residents in Marshall to find a health provider in the area that is affordable and Spanish-speaking. Affordability was cited as a concern whether the individual has health insurance or not. There are not enough public transportation options to travel or go to the clinic or hospital.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: LONG PRAIRIE



Long Prairie is a city located in Todd County in central Minnesota. As of 2015, the estimated population of Long Prairie was 3,392. Approximately 34% of Long Prairie's population identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic. MCLA's community listening session in Long Prairie was held on June 15, 2017. An estimated 25 people, including children, participated in the listening session, and of these 14 chose to complete MCLA's demographic survey.

Thirteen women responded to the survey, and one respondent did not specify their gender. The average age was 36.8 years old, ranging from 13 to 68. Three of the participants were born in the United States, ten were originally from other countries, and one chose not to respond. Four were completely fluent in English, and the other ten were not fully fluent. Four participants stated that they were currently employed, and ten said that they were not currently employed. Eleven of the participants had children.

Other Local Concerns

In addition to the major findings described elsewhere in this report, community members emphasized the following issues which were corroborated during the second phase of our visits to validate findings:

- **Barriers to Employment:** Participants stated that there are few jobs available around Long Prairie. If jobs are available, language ability and immigration status may be barriers to obtaining employment. This is why driver's licenses continues to be a number one priority.
- **Language as a Barrier:** Not only is language a barrier to finding employment, but it is also an obstacle at school and when it comes to banking. Students at the session stated that they have been discouraged from speaking Spanish at school when they are outside the classroom. Adult participants at the session also said that there aren't bilingual people working at local banks, so language is a barrier for them in utilizing banks' services.
- **Access to Dental Care, Mental Health Services, and Nutritious Food:** Many Long Prairie residents don't have options for low-cost dental care and may drive as far away as Alexandria or Sauk Center to receive dental care. Mental health services and nutritious food at schools were emphasized as well.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: NORTHFIELD

Northfield is a city located in Rice County in south eastern Minnesota. As of 2015, the estimated population of Northfield was 20,309. Approximately 7% of Northfield's population identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic. MCLA's community listening session in Northfield was held on June 22, 2017. An estimated 30 people, including children, participated in the listening session, and of these 25 chose to complete MCLA's demographic survey.

Eight men and 17 women responded to the survey. The average age was 40.5 years old, ranging from 15 to 59. Two of the participants were born in the United States, 22 were originally from other countries, and one chose not to respond. Eight were completely fluent in English, 15 were not fully fluent, and two chose not to respond. Sixteen participants stated that they were currently employed, seven said that they were not currently employed, and two chose not to respond. Seventeen of the participants had children.



Other Local Concerns

In addition to the major findings described elsewhere in this report, community members emphasized the following issues which were corroborated during the second phase of our visits to validate findings:

- **Students Need Additional Support:** Latino students need additional support from teachers and from school programs to be successful. Part of this need includes language support but also seeing Latino educators in the classroom who can advocate for these students' interests. Anti-bullying and after school programs were also mentioned, along with preventive health education.
- **Affordable Adult Education Needed:** Adults in Northfield would like to have access to educational programs teaching English or other skills, but they find that adult education opportunities may be limited for them. Lack of affordability and limited access to scholarships may be related to immigration status.
- **Latino Community Not Unified:** Participants in the listening session believed that important issues such as driver's licenses for all and affordable housing should unite and mobilize Latino community members. However, they see a lack of unity as a barrier to achieving gains in these areas.
- **Other Issues Mentioned:** Labor rights, passing a bill replacing the ITIN number instead of the social security number, funds to protect immigrants and refugees, and public transit between rural localities.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: MANKATO



Mankato is a city located in Blue Earth County in south central Minnesota. As of 2015, the estimated population of Mankato was 45,557. Approximately 3% of Mankato's population identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic. MCLA's community listening session in Mankato was held on June 28, 2017. An estimated 25 people, including children, participated in the listening session, and of these 13 chose to complete MCLA's demographic survey.

Eleven women and two men responded to the survey. The average age was 31.8 years old, ranging from 14 to 52. Seven of the participants were born in the United States, five were originally from other countries, and one chose not to respond. Ten were completely fluent in English, and the other three were not fully fluent. Eleven participants stated that they were currently employed, and two said that they were not currently employed. Nine of the participants had children.

Other Local Concerns

In addition to the major findings described elsewhere in this report, community members emphasized the following issues which were corroborated during the second phase of our visits to validate findings:

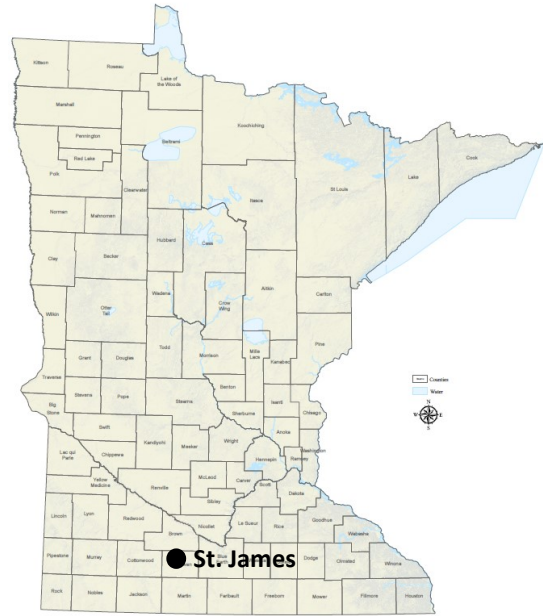
- **Barriers to Becoming a Business Owner:** Participants cited a lack of information and resources as reason for why members of the Latino community in Mankato are not becoming business owners. They have found it difficult to understand the system and, in particular, to go about getting business loans. However, participants at the community validation session thought that some of the recommendations regarding business-ownership are less suitable for undocumented workers.
- **Inadequate Medical Interpretation:** Language is frequently a barrier in provision of health care in the Mankato area. When clinics lack bilingual staff, family members or friends are often used to interpret at medical appointments. This can cause serious problems in providing appropriate care to non-English speaking patients. Participants emphasized that access to health insurance and affordability are priority issues.
- **Inaccessible Higher Education:** Higher education often seems untenable to members of the Latino community due to high cost of attending college. Many participants at the session stated that they were worried about paying off their own student loans, and others expressed reluctance to attend university because of the loans they would need to take out.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: ST. JAMES

St. James is a city located in Watonwan County in south western Minnesota. As of 2015, the estimated population of St. James was 4,508. Approximately 36% of St. James' population identify themselves as Latino or Hispanic. MCLA's community listening session in St. James was held on June 29, 2017. An estimated 30 people, including children, participated in the listening session, and of these 20 chose to complete MCLA's demographic survey.

Thirteen women and seven men responded to the survey. The average age was 38.4 years old, ranging from 12 to 72. Seven of the participants were born in the United States, and 13 were originally from other countries. Nine were completely fluent in English, nine were not fully fluent, and two chose not to respond. Thirteen participants stated that they were currently employed, four said that they were not currently employed, and three chose not to respond. Twelve of the participants had children.



Other Local Concerns

In addition to the major findings described elsewhere in this report, community members emphasized the following issues which were corroborated during the second phase of our visits to validate findings:

- **Parental Support of Students Needed:** Many parents of students at the listening session noted that Latino parental involvement at school is lacking in St. James. They believe students would be more motivated to succeed if they saw that their school performance mattered. One suggestion for improvement is to have interpreters more readily available at school events so that parents could understand what non-Spanish speaking teachers were telling them.
- **Anti-Latino Discrimination by Police:** A number of participants at the listening session indicated that they had been followed to their homes or parking spaces by police officers without cause. They felt that this had occurred for the color of their skin only, as they were not committing any traffic violations.
- **Separation between Latinos and Other Groups:** Participants noted that there is a separation between Latinos in the community and other groups. They believe that language is one barrier to a more unified community and also a lack of cultural competence.
- **Other Issues Mentioned:** Participants' support of Municipal IDs, driver's licenses for all, citizenship courses, public transit with better schedules to improve the economy, safety, reduce or eliminate fear in the community, and need for better job options and opportunities.



CONCLUSION

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs will translate the recommendations in this report into a legislative agenda and work with the Minnesota legislature and governor's office to achieve these goals and improve the lives of Minnesotan Latinos. Recommendations are substantiated by direct input from the Latino communities in rural Minnesota and conversations with community leaders. They are further supported by research into the locations visited and the populations residing there.

The Council encourages local leaders and communities to review the community profiles of their town. These community profiles allow for a deeper understanding of key concerns for residents, some of which may be attended to by local government and other local actors.

MCLA returned to the cities visited in October and November 2017 to meet with listening session participants once more and verify that the findings of this report matched their opinions. The report's findings were confirmed by participants, and where they did not, MCLA edited the final version of this report to reflect the participants' views more fully.

MCLA cannot include in this report all the issues that were raised during the community engagement tour, even though the Council recognizes their importance to community members. The Council therefore urges each and every Latino constituent to make their voice heard by contacting their elected officials.

Much work must be done to address the concerns of Latinos throughout Minnesota, but MCLA witnessed these communities' fortitude and determination to make Minnesota a better place for themselves and their families. Community members that the Council spoke to came to Minnesota because they see it as safe, calm environment, and they have been contributing to the state for generations. Working together, the Latino communities and local and state leaders can address these challenges and make a better future.

APPENDIX A: LISTENING SESSION QUESTIONS

MCLA developed 6 research questions to ask listening session participants which were consistent across all 7 community listening sessions. The questions give Latino constituents an opportunity to discuss challenges they face across MCLA's four policy areas, along with a question about general conditions for the Latino community in their city and solutions they would propose to improve life for Minnesotan Latinos.

1. *General:* As a resident of (City Name), what are the main problems or difficulties that you face as a member of the Latino community?
2. *Health:* Regarding access to health services, what are your major concerns?
3. *Education:* Regarding the topic of education, and considering that this includes early education like preschool and Kindergarten and education from primary school to university, what are some of the challenges that you face as a community?
4. *Economic Development:* What are your financial goals for your family? What barriers do you face in daily life that prevent you from fulfilling your goals?
5. *Immigration:* In what way do immigration laws affect you, your family, or your community in your day to day life?
6. *Solutions:* Now that we have identified some barriers or difficulties or maybe some things that are working well that we want to duplicate, what are some solutions that you have for these problems or that you would recommend to your representatives or to those who make political decisions?

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SURVEY (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH OR ENGLISH)

1. How would you define yourself?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Other _____

2. What is your age? _____

3. Do you consider yourself Latino or Hispanic?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. What would you consider defines your race?
(the person conducting the interview will explain)

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Multiracial/Biracial
- ☐ Other _____

5. Where were you born? _____

6. If born in another country, how long have you
been living in the US?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

How long have you been living in Minnesota?

If you moved to XX, when? _____

Where from? _____

How long have you been living in XX?

7. Do you speak English?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. (Continued)

If yes, how fluent are you?

- ☐ Completely
- ☐ Partially
- ☐ Have difficulties
- ☐ Very low fluency

8. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ Did not attend school
- ☐ Some elementary
- ☐ Elementary completed
- ☐ Some junior high
- ☐ Junior high completed
- ☐ Some high school or less
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalent
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ College graduate
- ☐ Masters or Doctorate

9. Including yourself, how many people live in
your household? _____

10. Which one of the following represents your
total household income before tax (considering all
income in the household?)

- ☐ Less than \$15,000
- ☐ \$16,000- \$24,999
- ☐ \$25,000- \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000- \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 or more

11. Do you have children?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, how many? _____

APPENDIX C: REFERENCES

- ¹ ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from factfinder.census.gov
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Owen, G., Meyerson, J., & Otteson, C. (2010). A new age of immigrants: Making immigration work for Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ANewAgeofImmigrants.pdf>
- ⁶ ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from factfinder.census.gov
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Minnesota Compass. Groups at a Glance: Hispanic children and youth. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.mncompass.org/children-and-youth/groups-at-a-glance-hispanic>
- ¹¹ Mitchell, T. (2016, November 03). U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/unauthorized-immigrants/>
- ¹² Delva, J., Horner, P., Sanders, L., Martinez, R., Lopez, W. D., & Doering-White, J. (2013). Mental health problems of children of undocumented parents in the United States: A hidden crisis. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, 13(3), 25-35.
- ¹³ ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from factfinder.census.gov
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ MN Department of Education. 2015-2016 Enrollment by Gender/Ethnicity. Retrieved from <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ MN Department of Education. Primary Home Language Counts by County 2013-2014 – Spanish. Retrieved from <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Maps.jsp>
- ¹⁹ Lonetree, Anthony. "Teachers of color in high demand in Minnesota." Mar 19, 2017. *Star Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.startribune.com/teachers-of-color-in-high-demand-in-minnesota/416520723/>
- ²⁰ Minnesota Compass. Hispanic high school students graduating on time - Rank of states, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.mncompass.org/children-and-youth/high-school-graduation#1-12658-g>
- ²¹ MN Department of Education. Minnesota Report Card – Graduation Rate. Retrieved from <http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#graduation/>
- ²² MN Department of Education. Minnesota Report Card – 2015 College Going. Retrieved from <http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#collegeGoing/>
- ²³ MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2015 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)
Universe: Households - 2011-2015 American Community Survey Selected Population Tables
- ²⁴ Kandiyohi County Economic Development Commission. Major Employers. Retrieved from <http://kandiyohi.com/business/major-employers/>
- ²⁵ City of Worthington. Community Profile. Retrieved from <http://www.ci.worthington.mn.us/community-profile>
- ²⁶ Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce. Marshall Area Major Employers. Retrieved from https://marshall-mn.org/main/images/PDFs/Marshall_Major_Employers_2015.pdf
- ²⁷ Long Prairie – Minnesota. Long Prairie's Leading Employers. Retrieved from http://www.longprairie.net/index.asp?SEC=FC488BDC-650A-424F-88DC-2560008FAAC3&Type=B_BASIC
- ²⁸ City of Northfield Minnesota. Comprehensive Plan for Northfield. (Nov 17, 20088) Retrieved from <http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/286/Comprehensive-Plan>
- ²⁹ Greater Mankato Growth. Major Employers. Retrieved from <https://greatermankato.com/major-employers-0>
- ³⁰ St. James Minnesota. City of St. James, Minnesota Demographics and Employment Information
Retrieved from <http://www.ci.stjames.mn.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/339>
- ³¹ EMPLOYMENT STATUS - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
- ³² SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE IN THE UNITED STATES - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Sechler, Angie. "Will Minnesota improve access to dental services for the rural and underserved?" Apr 25, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2017/04/will-minnesota-improve-access-dental-services-rural-and-underserved>
- ³⁵ Minnesota Department of Health, Office of Rural Health and Primary Care. "Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Low-Income Designations, 2014.
- ³⁶ LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER (HISPANIC OR LATINO). Universe: Hispanic or Latino population 5 years and over - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate